

## ***WHAT IS APPRENTICESHIP?***

Apprenticeship is an organized method of skilled trade or craft training that dates back to the time of the Babylonians. While the United States Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training lists over 800 different apprenticeship occupations, the vast majority of apprentices are involved in learning trades involved in construction and industry. Apprenticeships in these occupations are similar to college degree programs, in terms of their duration. Most require a two to five year commitment to a course of study. Unlike most college programs, however, the majority of the learning takes place on the job, under the supervision and guidance of skilled journey level workers. Since they are actually working full time at their chosen occupation, apprentices are earning a paycheck while they are learning. This pay increases as their skills grow and improve. The completion of all training and of required hours working on the job entitles one to the title of journey level craftsman, with the appropriate benefits and compensation. Most importantly, apprentices have acquired something that can never be lost—a skilled trade.